

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
CITY OF ALAMEDA PLANNING BOARD  
MONDAY, JANUARY 10, 2011

1. CONVENE: 7:06 p.m.

2. FLAG SALUTE: Board Member Lynch

3. ROLL CALL: Present: President Ezzy Ashcraft, Vice-President Autorino, Board Members Kohlstrand, Lynch and Zuppan

Absent: Board Member Ibsen

4. MINUTES:

Minutes from the Regular Meeting of October 25, 2010

Motion to approve minutes by Board Member Kohlstrand, seconded by Board Member Ibsen. **Motion passes (4-0).**

Minutes from the Regular Meeting of November 8, 2010 (Continued due to lack of quorum)

5. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSION:

**Item 8A moved to Regular Agenda Items**

6. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:

Written Report

**6-A Future Agendas**

Staff presented an overview of upcoming planning project.

**6-B Zoning Administrator Report**

**Meeting of 1-4-11**

PLN10-0297 1951 Main St. Amendment and extension of Interim Use Permit.

**Approved by Zoning Administrator**

PLN10-0352 1542 Sherman Street Administrative Variance and Design Review.

**Approved by Zoning Administrator**

Oral Report

None.

7. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

8. CONSENT CALENDAR:

**Item 8A moved to Regular Agenda Items**

## 9. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:

**8-A PLN10-0366 – Zoning Compliance – 2428 Central Avenue – City of Alameda.** The applicant requests approval of a Use Determination that the structure located at 2428 Central Avenue is a legal non-conforming use as a 62 unit multi-family building.

Board member Kohlstrand requested that staff give an overview of the project.

Debbie Potter, Housing Authority Development Manager, reported that the Housing Authority is requesting a Zoning Conformance Determination because the Housing Authority is in the beginning stages of negotiating with the owner to purchase the property and redevelop it as permanent Affordable Workforce Housing. She stated that in November 2010 the City Council and the Redevelopment Agency took action to authorize the Housing Authority to negotiate a purchase agreement with the owner. Three non-profit development teams were interviewed and they are hoping to select one and present the project to the Housing Commission on January 19, 2011. The Housing Authority is hoping to fast-track the project while funding is available. She mentioned that the project will be back before the Planning Board in the future for review and approval of exterior renovations.

Board member Kohlstrand asked if the project was exempt from environmental review because it is a continuation of an existing use.

Ms. Potter stated that it was in fact exempt and any future renovations of the site would primarily be comprised of exterior façade changes, which could be exempt under CEQA.

Vice President Autorino asked how far the Housing Authority is in the purchase negotiations with the owner.

Ms. Potter stated that the purchase agreement was sent to the owner in mid December. She stated that the current purchase amount is commensurate with the owner's sale amount, which should help expedite the property transfer process. Also, the Housing Authority is currently conducting a fair market appraisal to assure that the price is appropriate.

Board member Lynch suggested that the Housing Authority include a clause in the agreement, in case of a non-performance issue in a predetermined time period, to allow the agency to bring on another development entity to complete the project, if necessary.

Ms. Potter stated that the Housing Authority is sensitive to these issues and have placed a timeline in the agreement in which construction must commence.

President Ezzy Ashcraft asked if parking and the possible retail space on the ground floor will be discussed when the item is brought back to the Planning Board.

Ms. Potter stated that the parking will be discussed but that retail is not being proposed for this project, as it is 100% residential. However, she did point out that there may be some community space on the ground floor for use by the residents.

The motion to approve the Zoning Compliance Determination for 2428 Central Avenue to allow it as a legal non-conforming use as a 62-unit multi-family building was made by Board member Zuppan and seconded by Board member Kohlstrand. **Approved 5-0**

**9-A PLN10-0337 – Variance & Major Design Review – 2216 Lincoln Ave. Housing Consortium of the East Bay.** The applicant requests approval of a private open space Variance and Major Design Review for the construction of a 19-unit affordable housing project on approximately .48 acres. The site is a former City staff parking lot within the R-6, Hotel Residential District zoning district.

Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch, Planning Services Manager, gave a brief description of the project. She mentioned that the Public Works Department recently painted additional curbs red in the area for safety reasons, eliminating two parking spaces in the area. The curb work was not in conjunction with the project at 2216 Lincoln Avenue.

She explained that the applicant is requesting a variance to the requirement for Private Open Space because Housing and Urban Development (HUD) do not fund private open space, calculated per unit, such as balconies, for the developmentally disabled. Requiring the project to maintain the development regulations could jeopardize the project's funding. However, the property will have many added common amenities such as a community room and a computer lab to make up for the lack of private open space. There will also be a large amount of common open space.

Concerning the Major Design Review she reported that the proposed construction meets all zoning development standards except for the private open space requirement. The design provides a harmonious transition in scale between the adjacent small and large housing developments.

Mrs. Kavanaugh-Lynch, stated that regarding the parking for low-income housing developments, the applicant has supplied data to support a reduction in the amount of required parking to .5 or less spaces per unit. The Public Works Department has added a condition of approval to require that the parking will be monitored annually to ensure that all tenant and service providers park on site and para transit vans and other special transportation vehicles exit the site facing forward and not backing out on to Lincoln Avenue.

In reference to the Alameda Municipal Code (AMC) Article 26 (Measure A) prohibiting the construction of a building containing more than two contiguous units (multi-family), the Alameda Housing Authority is allowed to construct multi-family affordable housing under the Guyton Settlement Agreement of 1990.

President Ezzy Ashcraft called on the co-applicants on the project to give a presentation.

Dori Kojima, the Director of Housing Development with Satellite Housing, thanked the Board Members and gave a brief introduction to the organizations co-sponsoring the project. She introduced Darin Lounds, Executive Director of the Housing Consortium of the East Bay (HCEB), Brianne Steinhauer, HCEB Project Manager, Cindy Heavens, Project manager with Satellite Housing and the architects Rick Williams and Ben Chuaqui with Van Meter Williams Pollack.

Ms. Kojima stated that Satellite Housing is a non-profit formed in 1966 and have 25 communities around the Bay Area serving seniors, working families and individuals with special needs. She mentioned that Satellite Housing services approximately 1,600 residents and 1,500 units. They develop affordable housing along with property management and comprehensive resident services allowing residents to reach their full potential to live independently and allow seniors to age in place.

Darin Lounds of HCEB gave a brief background of HCEB. He stated that HCEB create inclusive communities through affordable, accessible housing for persons with developmental disabilities and other special needs in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. HCEB was founded in 1996 and their primary focus is on housing support services, tenant liaison services and housing development thanks to a partnership with Satellite Housing. HCEB currently owns and manages 20 properties most of which are for people with developmental disabilities. Mr. Lounds reported that developmental disabilities occur before the age of 18 years and is expected to continue indefinitely. It includes such disabilities as mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy and autism. He stated that the City of Alameda, as of two years ago had 754 persons with developmental disabilities and Oakland had 4,776 for a total of 18,978 and the vast majority of these individuals are at 30% or lower of the Area Median Income (AMI). He mentioned that the property at 2216 Lincoln Avenue is ideally located for a project of this type because most residents do not drive and the area has amenities close by. The HCEB proposes 19 one and two bedroom apartments to provide independent living for low-income individuals with developmental disabilities. The project will feature a community room, central laundry, computer lab and a variety of common open spaces. One of the units will be a Resident Manager's apartment and there will be an office on site. The building will have accessible units and there will be a strong coordination with resident support services on site.

Rick Williams, architect with Van Meter Williams Pollack reported that his office has worked on a number of special needs and senior developments with this team in the past. He stated that 2216 Lincoln Avenue is a transition site located adjacent to a 1960's apartment building and residential homes. The site will have 9 parking spaces which he feels is ample and the parking area will be screened from view with trellises. The site currently has 2 curb cut driveways and that will be reduced to one. He gave a presentation showing the design renderings and conceptual landscape plan incorporating storm water management and Bay Friendly landscaping. There will be a courtyard, raised planters and specially designed open space for the disabled. The units will be specifically designed and they are working with a group of people with developmental disabilities to ensure compatibility. The exterior design is made to fit in with the neighborhood.

Mr. Williams mentioned that both HCEB and Satellite Housing are focused on green and sustainable development including water conservation, solar energy and walkability. The development will also pay attention to the indoor air quality using low or no VOC paints and finishes and formaldehyde-free products.

President Ezzy Ashcraft opened the public comment period.

Art Kurrasch, Chair of the Housing Commission, spoke in favor of the project.

Richard Albert, father of a potential resident, spoke in favor of the project.

Denis Craig, resident, spoke in favor of the project.

Lauren Steinberg, Center for Independent Living, spoke in favor of the project.

David Baker, resident, questioned where the funding for this project is coming from in light of the recent financial troubles state and local agencies are facing.

Ms. Potter stated that the financing is a combination of local, state, and federal funding. The local financing will come from the City of Alameda's Redevelopment Agency the Community Improvement Commission (CIC) and the amount the project is requesting is money that the CIC has on hand. The State of California source of financing comes from the Multi-Family Housing Program (MHP) which are funds that are exclusively for affordable housing and cannot be recaptured by the State for any other uses. Once the MHP funds are expended there will be no more State funding. The HUD 811 Program is funded at the federal level for affordable housing.

Christopher Buckley, resident, suggested that the stair tower be reduced in height to better fit with the building size. He also suggested that the windows have a thicker profile to give them a wood-like appearance. He would like the cement fiber siding boards in the front of the building to be smooth. His suggestions only apply to the street facing side of the building.

Board member Lynch suggested that the architect and Planning staff work on the issues discussed.

President Ezzy Ashcraft is concerned that if the project is delayed it could jeopardize the funding.

Mr. Williams stated that he has discussed with the Planning Department that if there are minor revisions requested over time they will continue to work with them to improve the design of the project. He assured Mr. Buckley that they have had a number of lengthy conversations over the stair tower and it will be treated in a way that is fitting and appropriate.

President Ezzy Ashcraft reiterated the approvals before the Planning Board. The Board is being asked to approve a variance for the lack of Private open Space and approve the Major Design Review for the construction of a 19 unit affordable housing project.

Board member Lynch thanked staff, HCEB and Satellite Housing for presenting an outstanding project. He also stated that of all the projects of this nature that he has been involved with in other jurisdictions, none of them have maximized the parking, instead they have had little to no parking at all.

Board member Kohlstrand stated that she supports the project and the requested variance. She asked if the architect had looked at ways to put the parking in the rear of the site. She also suggested that the large electrical vault shown in the front of the property be placed behind the trellis screening, possibly by pulling the trellis forward. She expressed concern about the stairwell and the elements that have the vertical siding opposed to the horizontal siding because she feels they are unarticulated in terms of the design. She commended the project for the Bay Friendly Landscaping and questioned why the bike rack ratio was so low at 1 bicycle space per 10 parking spaces.

Mr. Lounds of HCEB responded that there are 12 bike parking spots and the intent was to out-number the parking spaces.

Mr. Williams responded that they did consider placing the parking in the rear of the site but it meant keeping the double driveways and required twice the amount of paving on the site. He stated that Alameda Municipal Power (AMP) requires that the transformer be within 5 feet of the sidewalk but they would do all that they can to screen it with landscaping.

Board member Zuppan was concerned that the building only has one elevator and cited the length of time generally needed to repair them, if broken. She asked if they had a back-up plan should the elevator be broken for any length of time.

Mr. Williams responded that HUD 811 housing only allows a certain number of units per project and the cost of another elevator is very expensive. On other properties the elevators are maintained frequently and are watched carefully and have very few down days. Also, under HUD requirements, if the elevator is down for a lengthy amount of time you need to build a new one.

Mr. Lounds stated that the plan is to have the wheelchair bound tenants living on the ground floor.

President Ezzy Ashcraft stated that she is very excited about the project. She would like the architect and applicant to work with staff to incorporate Mr. Buckley and Board member Kohlstrand's suggestions into the project.

Board member Kohlstrand made the motion to approve a variance for private open space and approve the Major Design Review for the construction of a 19- unit affordable housing project with the following amendments:

- Item 8 shall read “no less than a minimum of 9 bike parking spaces.”
- Add a condition to “screen the electrical transformer to the extent available”
- Add a condition to “refine the design of the stairwell and elevator shaft elements”

Vice President Autorino seconded the motion as amended. **Approved with Conditions 5-0**

**9-B Overview of SB 375, the Regional Sustainable Communities Strategy and the Opportunities for Involvement by the City of Alameda**  
**Informational Only**

Andrew Thomas, Planning Services Manager, reported on the regional effort the City of Alameda will be participating in, which has important implications to Alameda in the future. It is an effort initiated by Senate Bill 375 to address global warming in the State. The Planning and Public Works Departments are working together and are attending a series of meetings held by regional agencies that will continue for the next two years. Basically, the State is requiring a discussion about ways to reduce green house gas emissions. SB 375 calls for the development of a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) in all metropolitan regions in California. Within the Bay Area, the law gives joint responsibility for the SCS to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). These agencies will coordinate with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District) and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC).

Mr. Thomas explained that once the State Legislation determines the most sustainable way to develop, then State funds and resources will be available related to housing development, housing allocations, transportation fund, planning grants and housing grants. Grants will go to those communities that are taking the responsibility to comply with the Statewide climate regulations in a positive way. Alameda has development opportunities with Alameda Point, Alameda Landing, Northern Waterfront and sections of Park Street and Webster Street. Being in-line with this bill would position Alameda in the future to be eligible for funds for the aforementioned developments. Should Alameda be unable to comply it would be hard to obtain these funds. The concept is that cities that take on this process will be better positioned in the future to receive State funds.

**10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:**

None.

**11. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS:**

None.

**12. ADJOURNMENT:** 9:20 p.m.